



## **CITY OF HAYWARD**

### **AGENDA REPORT**

AGENDA DATE	<u>01/18/00</u>
AGENDA ITEM	<u>5</u>
WORK SESSION ITEM	<u>          </u>

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Director of Public Works

**SUBJECT:** Safe Routes to Schools

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council authorize staff to submit applications for the planning activities, as well as the three projects described below, in conjunction with the Safe Routes to School program.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

On October 6, 1999, Governor Davis signed AB 1475 (Soto), which redirects approximately one-third of the annual Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) safety funds from railroad grade crossings and other transportation programs to a new program called "Safe Routes to Schools." The goal of AB 1475 is to demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of a "safe routes to schools" program. This new Act became effective January 1, 2000, and will remain in effect until January 1, 2002, unless a later enacted statute deletes or extends the sunset date.

Approximately \$40 million will be available in a statewide competitive program covering two funding cycles. In the initial cycle, applications are due to Caltrans by April 6, 2000. Applications for the second cycle will be due in October 2000. Therefore, if the City is not successful with one of its applications in the first cycle, another opportunity for submitting projects will be available. It is anticipated that successful applications in the first cycle will be announced on May 11, 2000.

The Caltrans Hazard Elimination Safety Program (HES) guidelines were the primary source of information used in preparing the draft Safe Routes to Schools guidelines. The City of Hayward has been very successful in the past in obtaining HES funds for projects such as the Hesperian-Aldengate traffic signal and the Citywide emergency vehicle traffic signal preemption program.

Projects that address specific pedestrian and/or bicycle safety problems are eligible for funding. Such projects include new or upgraded traffic signals, pavement markings, new or improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and turning lanes. The standard reimbursement rate for these funds is 90 percent. However, traffic signals, traffic signs, and pavement markings may be eligible for 100 percent reimbursement.

At this time, planning activities are not eligible for funding. However, City staff feels that in order for the funds to be directed to the most critical projects, planning is an important component and should be eligible for reimbursement from this funding source. Planning for this program would include the development of maps for each of the schools identifying the recommended routes to schools, locations of crosswalks, crossing guards, traffic signals, and sidewalks. Other important planning activities would include evaluation of traffic speeds, study of accident frequency and history, and conducting vehicular and pedestrian counts. In this fashion, the gaps in the present system could be identified and projects that will best complete the gaps could be developed and proposed for funding.

Caltrans staff has indicated that the only "planning activity" eligible for funding from this program is preliminary engineering associated with a specific capital project (as is presently the case). City staff will continue to discuss the eligibility of planning activities with Caltrans and with Metropolitan Transportation Commission staff. Consequently, staff recommends that a letter be sent to Caltrans recommending that planning activities associated with the Safe Routes to School program be included as eligible for such funds.

Although the guidelines are still in draft form, City staff has used them to identify potentially eligible Safe Routes to Schools projects. In addition, staff reviewed City planning documents and feedback obtained from various community meetings dealing with traffic safety issues. Consequently, three potential projects were identified as discussed below. Please note that the maximum level of funds available, per project, is \$500,000, and because of the limited funding few large projects are likely to be funded.

#### Construct Improvements to the Huntwood-Schafer Intersection - Estimated Cost: \$500,000

This project would install a traffic signal at Huntwood Avenue and Schafer Road and would install railroad crossing gates, fencing to direct pedestrians to cross at the railroad crossing, and a sidewalk on the east side of Huntwood south of Schafer to provide better access to the railroad crossing. Additionally, approximately 500 feet of landscaped medians on Huntwood, north of Schafer, would be provided.

This project would provide safer access for school children crossing Huntwood to get to Tennyson High School. Pedestrians must now cross the Union Pacific Railroad tracks east of Huntwood to reach the school. The crossing gates would help serve as an additional warning in the event of approaching trains.

Additionally, traffic on Huntwood Avenue is increasing. A signal at Huntwood and Schafer would allow for a safer crossing of Huntwood to the high school. Since there is no sidewalk on the east side of Huntwood, provision of a sidewalk would further enhance safety by reducing potential pedestrian-automobile conflicts. Moreover, landscaped medians would encourage slower speeds, thereby increasing the safety potential.

The intersection meets the Caltrans warrants for a traffic signal based on "School Area Traffic Signals." As an interim measure, four-way stop signs are warranted and have been installed.

Install a Traffic Signal at Mission Boulevard and Blanche Street - Estimated cost: \$200,000

A traffic signal for the intersection of Mission Boulevard and Blanche Street has been proposed. Such a signal would make it easier for school children who live on the west side of Mission Boulevard to safely cross Mission Boulevard to reach El Rancho Verde Elementary School.

Caltrans has recently analyzed the need for a signal at this location and has concluded that a signal based on traffic volumes is not warranted. However, Caltrans has not analyzed a need for the signal based on pedestrian counts. As a result, City staff is planning to conduct pedestrian counts during the second week of January.

Upgrade Traffic Signal at "E" and Second Streets from a Six-Phase to an Eight-Phase Signal - Estimated Cost: \$70,000

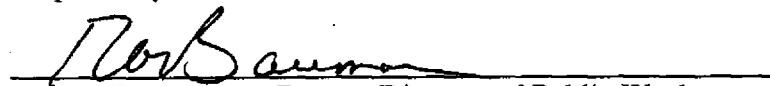
This project would provide easier pedestrian access to All Saints Church and School. City staff has received several complaints about the inadequate pedestrian crossing time at this location and has received a prior request from All Saints School regarding the upgrading of this signal.

By upgrading the signal from a six-phase to an eight-phase signal, more pedestrian crossing time can be provided, which would allow school children to safely cross "E" and Second Streets to the school. The proposed improvement would eliminate pedestrian conflicts with left-turning traffic.

**CONCLUSION:**

It is recommended that Council concur with staff's intent to submit a letter to Caltrans requesting that planning activities be included for funding under the Safe Routes to Schools program. If this request is approved, it is recommended that Council authorize staff to apply for this funding. It is further recommended that Council authorize staff to apply for funding for improvements at Huntwood Avenue and Schafer Road, Mission Boulevard and Blanche Avenue, and Second and "E" Streets.

Prepared by:



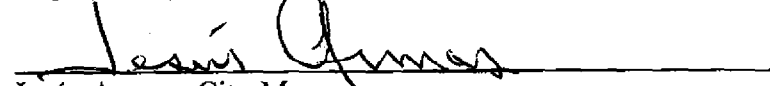
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Recommended by:



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Approved by:



Jesús Armas, City Manager